

Commandeth me that it be so
And if ther any aske me,
Whether that it be he or she,
How that this book the which is here
Shal hote, that I rede you here;
It is the Romance of the Rose,
In which al the art of love I close.

THE mater fair is of to make;
God graunte in gree that she it take
for whom that it begonnen is!
And that is she that bath, ywis,
So mochel prys; and therto she
So worthy is biloved be,
That she wel oughte, of prys and right,
Be cleped Rose of every wight.

THAT it was May me thoughte tho,
It is fyve yere or more ago;
That it was May, thus dremed me,
In tyme of love and jolitee,
That al thing ginneth waxen gay,
for ther is neither busk nor hay

In May, that it nil shrouded been,
And it with newe leves wreen.
These wodes eek recoveren grene,
That drye in winter been to sene;
And the erthe wexeth proud withalle,
for swote dewes that on it falle,
And al the pore estat forget
In which that winter hadde it set,
And than bicometh the ground so proud
That it wol have a newe shroud,
And maketh so queynt his robe and fayr
That it hath hewes an hundred payr
Of gras and floures, inde and pers,
And many hewes ful dyvers:
That is the robe I mene, ywis,
Through which the ground to preisen is.

THE briddes, that han left hir song,
Whyl they han suffred cold so strong
In wedres grille, and derk to sighte,
Ben in May, for the sonne brighte,
So glade, that they shewe in singing,
That in hir herte is swich lyking,
That they mote singen and be light.
Than doth the nightingale hir might
To make noyse, and syngen blythe.
Than is blisful, many a sythe,
The chelaundre and the papingay.
Than yonge folk entenden ay
for to ben gay and amorous,
The tyme is than so savourous.
Hard is his herte that loveth nought
In May, whan al this mirth is wrought;
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale briddes singen clere
Hir blisful swete song pitous;
And in this sesoun delytous,
Whan love affrayeth alle thing,
Me thoughte anight, in my sleeping,
Right in my bed, ful redily,
That it was by the morowe erty,
And up I roos, and gan me clothe;
Anoon I wissh myn bondes bothe;
A sylvre nedle forth I drogh

Out of an aguiler queynt ynogh,
And gan this nedle threde anon;
for out of toun me list to gon
The sowne of briddes for to here,
That on these bussches singen clere.
And in the swete sesoun that leef is,
With a threde basting my slevis,
Hloon I wente in my playing,
The smale foules song harkning;
That peyned hem ful many a payre
To singe on bowes bloomed fayre.
Jolif and gay, ful of gladnesse,
Toward a river I gan me dresse,
That I herde renne faste by;
for fairer playing non saugh I
Than playen me by that river,
for from an hille that stood ther neer
Cam down the stream ful stif and bold.
Cleer was the water, and as cold
As any welle is, sooth to seyne;
And somdel lasse it was than Seime,
But it was straighter wel away.
And never saugh I, er that day,
The water that so wel lyked me;
And wonder glad was I to see
That lusty place, and that river;
And with that water that ran so cleer
My face I wissh. Tho saugh I wel
The botme paved everydel
With gravel, ful of stoness shene.
The medewe softe, swote, and grene,
Beet right on the watersyde.
ful cleer was than the morowtyde,
And ful attempre, out of drede.
Tho gan I walke through the mede,
Downward ay in my pleying,
The riversyde costeying.

AND whan I had a while
ful goon,
I saugh a Gardin right
anoon,
ful long and brood, and
everydel
Enclos it was, and walled
wel,
With hye walles enbat-
ailed,

Portrayed without, and wel entailed
With many riche portraitures;
And bothe images and peyntures
Gan I biholde bisily.
And I wol telle you, redily,
Of thilke images the semblaunce,
As fer as I have remembraunce.

A MIDDLE saugh I hate stonde,
That for hir wrathe, ire, and onde,
Semed to been a moveresse,
An angry wight, a chideresse;
And ful of gyle, and fel corage,
By semblaunt was that ilke image.
And she was nothing wel arrayed,
But lyk a wood woman afrayed;
Yfrounced foule was hir visage,
And grenning for dispitous rage;



hir nose shorted up for tene.
ful hidous was she for to sene,
ful foul and rusty was she, this.
hir heed ywritten was, ywis,
ful grimly with a greet towayle.

AN image of another entayle, **felonye**
A lift half, was hir faste by;
hir name above hir heed saugh I,
And she was called felonye.

ANOTHER image, that Vilanye **Vilanye**
Veleped was, saugh I and fond
Upon the walle on hir right bond.
Vilanye was lyk somdel
That other image; and, trusteth wel,
She semed a wikked creature.
By countenance, in portraiture,
She semed be ful despitous,
And eek ful proud and outrageous.
Wel coude he peynthe, I undertake,
That swiche image coude make.
ful foul and cherlish semed she,
And eek vilaynous for to be,
And lifel coude of norture,
To worshipe any creature.

Coveityse
AND next was peynted Coveityse,
That eggeth folk, in many gyse,
To take and yeve right nought ageyn.

And grete tresours up to leyn.
And that is she that for usure
Leneth to many a creature
The lasse for the more winning,
So coveitous is her brenning.
And that is she, for penyes fele,
That techeth for to robbe and stele
These theves, and these smale harlotes;
And that is routhe, for by hir throttes
ful many oon hangeth at the laste.
She maketh folk compasse and caste
To taken other folkes thing,
Through robberie, or miscounting.
And that is she that maketh trechoures;
And she that maketh false pledoures,
That with hir termes and hir domes
Doon maydens, children, and eek gromes
hir heritage to forgo.
ful croked were hir bondes two;
for Coveityse is ever wood
To gypen other folkes good.
Coveityse, for hir winning,
ful leef hath other mennes thing.

ANOTHER image set saugh I
Next Coveityse faste by,
And she was cleped Avarice, **Avarice**
ful foul in peynting was that vice;